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Theodore Roosevelt: An Appreciation, 1919.

THEODORE ROOSEVELT - - AN APPRECIATION

These words of Theodore Roosevelt may well form a fitting introduction to a resume and appraisal of his own life. For this nation owes to him not merely the material effect of what he did, not merely the laws he placed upon the statute books, or the victories he won over armed foes, but also the immense but indefinable moral influence produced by his deeds and acts themselves upon the national character.

Theodore Roosevelt was in very truth an immense moral influence, and that perhaps is his chief contribution to American life. Roosevelt's claim upon posterity will rest not upon any one act of epochal significance, nor upon any national new policy dramatically revealed and effected, nor yet upon literary productions of exceptionally compelling merit, but rather upon the tremendous moral appeal which his life as a whole, its fine harmony and balance, its abundant vigor, its varied interests and its exquisite devotions to ideals, made to the men of his generation. When you speak of Roosevelt you think not so much of any one of his acts or achievements as you do of the man himself. That is the true test of personality. And Roosevelt's legacy to America is the precious legacy of a colorful and dynamic personality. A life beautifully conceived and nobly sustained, capable of inspiring young and old to worthy emulation.

A personality is such an intricately and delicately woven thing that it is difficult to () or quality () for the sake of study. But we inevitably and of necessity do it. I would speak this morning of some of these essential qualities of the man which made him a great national figure, the idol of a people, and which ensure for him a place among the great men of America.

B. L. The quality that caught the fancy of the people above any was the quality of power - the dynamic energy force in the man. There was nothing of the flabby and flaccid in the man's physical or moral make-up. His were, to use his own vivid phrase, "the whip cord fibre of moral and mental strength". He spoke with admiration of the "iron days of the west - the iron fighter and the iron endurance" of the early frontiersmen who cut their way through the wilder-

ness settled a continent. And all his acts and words had the convincing quality of tremendous strength. He hated indolence and ease and preached the life of purposeful activity, the "strenuous life" to the individual and to the nation. quote p. 20.

But it was not mere strength, mere animal vitality which he preached. In his essay on Mankind and Statehood he clearly defined the purpose and aim of this strength. "If the strong man", he says, "has not in him the lift toward lofty things his strength makes him only a curse to himself and to his neighbor". Again in his essay on Character and Success, he says, "Bodily vigor is far good, and vigor of intellect even better, but above both is character." Here is the key to his philosophy of power. Acquire bodily strength and mental vigor only that your character may employ both to the noblest purpose and highest advantage.

This quality of hardihood and sturdiness will naturally recommend itself to a people that has need of both in exploiting a continent and in overcoming tremendous difficulties. And therefore ^{Roosevelt} became at once a symbol and the inspiration of American enterprise, daring and strenuous adventure,

2. XX Sanity. If Roosevelt was not a genius he had none of the vices of genius. He was not an extremist. A remarkable clearheadedness, a sustained sanity prevailed his entire life and exerted a controlling influence upon all his actions. He had ideals, but he did not possess the divine frenzy of the enthusiast, the prophet who demands a complete and immediate realization of them. He was content to achieve the good when the best was unattainable. He took the "best possible" when the "perfect best" was beyond his reach. And he realized that many men come sooner or later to realize that "the best is often the deadliest enemy of the good," that men who refuse to be moderate when perfection is impossible are defeating their own cause and hindering the course of true progress. He believed in reform - consistent, progressive, but not in revolution. quote p. 138. "The best and the good". and practiced.

I attribute the man's fine balance and sanity ~~WXX~~ principally to

his close contact with nature. Nature, especially to the civilized man, is a wonderful steadying, balancing, sweetening influence. The fret and irritation, the morbid sense of grievance and resentment, the feverish haste and intolerance are magically dispersed by the tender caress of the kind hand of mother earth, and in their place comes the truer knowledge, and the greater sympathy and a patience which endures. Perhaps there was too little of the man of vision in Roosevelt. Perhaps the habit of balance and poise kept (him) from becoming a great leader of men during the years of the Great War. It is not given to many to be blessed with both - the gift of vision and the gift of practical living.

3. And the third quality - was the harmony of his life - the complete man. I do not know of a figure in American history that was so complete in the varied attributes of the all around man as was Roosevelt. He was statesman, naturalist, explorer, historian, soldier, and writer and while not excelling in all, he was mediocre in none. What cannot be said of most Americans can truthfully be said of him - he knew the beautiful and sacred art of living.

So many Americans are professionalized, "jobified", functionalized. They are business men, or working men, or salesmen, but not ~~XXX~~ well-rounded, many-purposed, variously interested men. Roosevelt may well serve as a model to American men of action. In the midst of an intense political career, which absorbed a great deal of his time and energy, a career which led from the office of assemblyman ~~XXX~~ in Albany to the presidency in the White House, he still found time to devote himself to beautiful, cultural avocations, which enriched his life.

C. While his chief contribution to himself, he meant a great deal to America because of his acts and political teachings.

1. Reformation of business morality

1. Big business (read paper)
2. Wealth (read p. 9 - "American ideals")
3. Peckless cock

3. Reckless capital (read paper)

4. Reckless labor (read paper)

2. True Americanism -

1. Roosevelt loved America, saw its promise.

2. Believed in a () America but also -

3. Patriotism - no wishy-washy cosmopolitanism (read paper)

D. Conclusion

America is grateful that Roosevelt lived. And his memory will be treasured in the living hearts of his people.



These words of T. R. may well form a fitting introduction to a ~~summary~~ resume and appraisal of his own life. For this nation owes to him not merely the material effect of what he did, and merely the laws he placed upon the statute books or the victims he won over armed foes, but also the immense but inadequate moral influence produced by his deeds and words themselves upon the ~~character~~ character.

T. R. was indeed ~~an~~ an immense moral influence, and that perhaps is his chief contribution to Am. life. R's claim upon posterity will rest not upon any one act of exceptional significance, nor upon any new national policy dramatically revealed and effected, nor yet upon literary productions of exceptionally compelling merit but rather upon the tremendous moral appeal which his life as a whole, its fine harmony ^{and balance}, its abundant vigor, its varied interests and its exquisite balance and austere devotion to ideals, made to the men of his generation.

When you speak of R. you think not so much of any one of his acts or achievements as you do of the man himself; that is the true test of personality. And R's legacy to America is the precious legacy of a colorful and dynamic personality, a life beautifully conceived and nobly sustained, capable of inspiring young and old to worthy emulation.

A personality is such an intimately and delicately woven thing that it is difficult to describe & probably a poor attempt to do so for the sake of study. But we inevitably and necessarily do it. I would speak this regarding some of the essential qualities of the man which made him a great national figure the idol of a people and which insure for him a place among the great men of America -

B.1 - The quality that caught the fancy of the American people almost any was the quality of power -

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This quality of ~~character~~ and ~~sturdiness~~
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1. Reformation of Business Morality

1. Big Business. (Read paper)
2. Wealth. (Read "G. J. - Am. Deals")
3. Riskless Capital. (Read paper)
4. Riskless Labor. (Read paper)

2. True Americanism

1. R. lived Am. Saw its promise.
2. Believed in broad Am. but also
3. Patriotism - no wishy-washy compromises. (Read paper)

II. Conclusion

Am. is grateful that R. lived. And his memory will be treasured in the loving hearts of his people.